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Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

Fourth session
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Item 3 of the provisional agenda
Improving the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards delivery on the 2030 Agenda

Terms of Reference for Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

Note by the secretariat

At its seventy-fifth meeting on 10 February 2015, the Executive Committee, with reference to paragraphs 17, 18 and 31(g) of Commission Decision A(65) on the outcome of the Review of the 2005 reform of Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and paragraph 24 of the Chairman's conclusions of the Executive Committee meeting on 6 February 2014, agreed to establish an ECE Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards (SCTCS), to replace the former Trade Committee. The terms of reference of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards were approved by the Executive Committee on 25 February 2015 (ECE/EX/22).

At its third session, held on 12-13 April 2017, Member States requested SCTCS support in achieving the global sustainable development goals (SDGs). To ensure prompt responsiveness, the Chair of the SCTCS decided to review the activities under the Steering Committee in terms of their consistency with the level of ambition of the 2030 Agenda.

This results of the review, which were prepared by the Chair with the support of the Secretariat following consultations with the Bureau members, are contained in document ECE/CTCS/2018/3. The document shows that the SCTCS is not used to its full potential and provides recommendations that build on achievements to date.

This document integrates these proposals into the SCTCS terms of reference under paragraph 3. It also integrates, under paragraph 5, the Executive Committee's decision from its eighty-sixth on 16 September 2016 (contained in document EXCOM/CONCLU/86) to suspend the requirement for the meetings of the SCTCS and Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships to be held back-to-back to facilitate effective meeting servicing. The document was prepared by the Chair in consultation with the Bureau members, and is presented to the SCTCS for decision.

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Terms of Reference of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

The Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards (hereinafter referred to as the "Steering Committee") is an intergovernmental body that oversees and guides the development of international norms and standards, procedures and best practices that reduce the costs associated with export and import processes and increase the efficiency, predictability and transparency of trade regulations and procedures and the movement of goods and services.

The Steering Committee shall:

1. Review and endorse standards and recommendations developed by the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) and the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7).

2. Draft the programme of work on trade capacity and standards and review and endorse the work plans of WP.6 and WP.7, and recommend these to the Executive Committee for approval.

3. Review the results of demand-driven studies (financed by extra-budgetary resources) that identify procedural and regulatory barriers to trade in Member States in coordination and cooperation with other relevant international organizations. Capacity building and technical assistance activities to help countries in the region to implement standards developed under the subprogramme may be decided in accordance with point 18(a) of Commission Decision A(65). *Support the achievement of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) 8 and 9 by reviewing the systemic issues emerging from the studies and the regulatory work of WP.6 and WP.7 following the proposals contained in document ECE/CTCS/2018/3.*

4. Liaise and coordinate its work with other ECE committees and relevant subsidiary bodies, in particular the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public- Private Partnerships and coordinate its work with other relevant United Nations programmes and agencies, as well as other relevant organizations and stakeholders and international standards-setting organizations in order to achieve synergies and to avoid possible overlap and duplication.

5. *Meet once a year for a maximum of 1½ days in a session that is open to all relevant international organizations and other stakeholders and held, as feasible, back-to-back with the annual session of either WP.6 or WP.7.*

6. Elect its own Bureau, which includes the Chairs of WP.6 and WP.7 as ex officio members.

7. Report to the Executive Committee.

8. Operate under the ECE Rules of Procedure and the Guidelines on procedures and practices for ECE bodies, as agreed in Commission Decision A(65).